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ABSTRACT

This book argues for much greater attention to ethical education and responds to skeptics who doubt its accomplishment in a pluralistic, secular society that is badly fragmented over values. The book seeks themes that unite rather than divide and provides a conceptual foundation for ethical education, broad enough for building consensus among teachers and parents, yet focused enough to provide guidance for highly specific learning activities. The second half of the book presents a series of steps by which a school community might proceed in building an ethical school. Chapter 1 examines and counters the objections to building an ethical school. Chapter 2 identifies patterns of school life that mitigate against a concern for nurturing ethical dispositions. The foundational qualities of an ethical person are described in the third chapter. Chapter 4 develops a multidimensional ethical framework based on the three areas of caring, justice, and criticism. A comprehensive picture of a school that fosters ethical practice and understanding is presented in the fifth chapter. Chapters 6 through 8 offer suggestions for launching the program for building an ethical school, designing the plan, and implementing the plan. The final chapter describes realities presented by students, teachers, the institution, and the nature of ethical life itself. Despite these challenges, it is argued that ethical education is a lifelong, worthy process. Sixteen figures are included. Appendices contain a list of selected resources and an annotated bibliography. (LMI)

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